

The Library Assistant:

The Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians.

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Published Monthly

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EDITORIALS.

The New Officers and Council.—We should like to extend a hearty welcome to the new Officers, and also to the new faces on the Council. This year, Mr. I. Briggs, of Newcastle, occupies the Presidential chair, and those who were privileged to hear his address have no doubt that he will worthily uphold the traditions of the Association. Mr. Briggs has for many years been associated with the North-Eastern Division, and we believe that its present excellence is due in no small measure to his unceasing work and energy. One face is missing from the Council. Mr. W. Benson Thorne has severed his connection, after a lengthy service. Assistants throughout the country owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Thorne, for his untiring work through many years on their behalf. Those whose privilege it has been to work alongside him will regret very much the loss of his valuable counsel and advice. Of ourselves, we are deeply sensible of the great honour conferred on us, and realise only too well, the brilliance of those who have already passed along the editorial path and what that means.

Library Association Council Election, 1924.—In connection with the forthcoming Library Association Council Election, we once again make a very earnest appeal to all our members, who can, to use their votes in the interest of the following candidates. All of them have, at some time or other, given generously of their time and services, in behalf of the welfare of our Association.

FOR LONDON COUNCIL.

Headicar, B. M., Librarian, London School of Economics.
Jones, Gurner P., B.A., Hon. Secretary, A. A. L.
Stewart, J. D., Chief Librarian, Bermondsey Public Libraries.
Thorne, W. Benson, Librarian, Bromley, E., Public Library.
Walker, J. E., Borough Librarian, Fulham Public Libraries.

FOR COUNTRY COUNCIL.

Briscoe, W. A., City Librarian, Nottingham.
 Cashmore, H. M., Deputy Chief Librarian, Birmingham.
 Roebuck, G. E., Chief Librarian, Walthamstow.
 Roberts, H. D., Director and Librarian, Brighton.
 Sayers, W. C. Berwick, Chief Librarian, Croydon.
 Sharp, H. A., Vice-President, A. A. L.
 Soper, A. Tapley, City Librarian, Exeter.
 Stephen, G. A., City Librarian, Norwich.

Our Next Issue.—The next number of the *Library Assistant* makes its appearance on the 1st of September. May we extend to all our members best wishes for a very pleasant holiday. If you *do* have time, and there is a library in the town—well, ten minutes work for the Association is not too much to ask, is it? We *must* get the thousand members.

Distribution of the Journal.—Some time ago, as an economic measure, the system was adopted of despatching *The Library Assistant* to various libraries in bulk. Now that the journal is printed at Croydon and the parcels despatched from Hackney, some slight delay must take place to recipients of parcels. Any members who now have their journals included in a parcel and would prefer to have their copies sent to them personally, should signify their desire to the address below. Similarly, a branch library staff desiring their copies to be sent direct to their branch instead of the Central, can be accommodated by sending a card to F. T. Bussey, Central Library, Mare Street, London, E. 8.

Swansea.—We are glad to see that though nearly five years after the passage of the Public Libraries Act, 1919, the libraries of Swansea are placed on the same footing as the other Municipal undertakings. The Committee are now free to budget in the same manner as the other Corporation departments. We are glad also to note that the *Cambrian Weekly Leader* is insisting that Swansea shall have a library system that it can be proud of.

Kensington.—An Exhibition of drawings, prints, photographs, etc., of Kensington, was opened by H.R.H. Princess Louise at the Town Hall, Kensington High Street, on the 30th June. The items have been selected from the collection in the Public Libraries of the Borough, and includes a selection of the Gardner prints. The Exhibition is arranged in sections dealing with the main centres of interest in Kensington, local and historical.

An American View.—The extract appearing below is from a recently published book on American municipal work and institutions. Its value to us as far as we can see is that it states admirably the ideal of the Public Library and whilst some of the statements are applicable to English Public Libraries, others are certainly not. The writer's assertion that there can be no comparison between school and library activities during the last thirty years, is equally true if applied to

England. We know only too well, that energetic librarians and Library Committees in England did not, until recent years, have the least chance of realising their dreams of a wider and better service to the community. Nowadays, as evidenced in news cuttings that come to hand, it is apparent that extension schemes are on foot in many parts of England. In quite a number of places one reads of new branches projected, and the rebuilding of old and out-of-date libraries to enable them to cope with modern requirements. How far these projects for a more efficient library system are likely to be successful, remains to be seen. At the moment the Ministry of Health seems to be the stumbling block. This position we fervently hope will not last long. Librarians throughout the country should endeavour to get their Member of Parliament to realise the barrier that is keeping the Public Library system from playing its proper part in the life of the community. However, we append the extract in question :—

“ The Public Library is an institution of great educational value, and its relation to the schools ought to be more intimate than is usually the case. It is potentially a far more effective agency of public education than it has been made. The schools and the Public Library have the same general mission, which is the education of the whole community. The Library, however, has by no means so fully appreciated the fullness of its responsibilities. Too often it is merely an ornate building with a miscellaneous assortment of books (mostly fiction) on its shelves. The authorities usually buy whatever their readers ask for, and rarely assume any real leadership in moulding the tastes of the Library's patrons. Its rules and regulations are sometimes needlessly strict, they place a damper upon the free use of the Library facilities. The tendency, moreover, has been to regard the Public Library as a place for adult readers primarily. But the way to enlarge this circle of adult readers is to bring them into touch with the resources of the Library while they are young, and the public schools are the natural channels through which this can be accomplished. Where it not for the schools, there would be no readers for the library.

In well-managed libraries a policy of co-operation with the schools is now being followed. Many of them have established juvenile departments in which an expert carefully chooses books that are likely to interest the young. Reading lists of interesting and timely subjects are also kept posted ; the pupils in the schools are encouraged to use the library in connection with their studies ; illustrated lectures are provided in the late afternoon hours and on Saturdays, and the whole atmosphere of the Library becomes one of welcome to readers of every age. It should not be thought, however, that all municipal Libraries are rendering this degree of service. The majority of them have not yet been shaken from their stupor. The reason, in part, at least, may be found in the personnel of Library Boards, or Library Trustees,

whether appointive or elective. These boards are composed for the most part of well-intentioned but easily satisfied men and women who are more concerned with the dignity of their work than with the measure of service rendered. Compare the progress in school activities during the past thirty years with that which has taken place in the Public Library administration ! There is no comparison. The suggestion that Library Boards should be abolished, and their functions transferred to the regular schools authorities has much to be said in its favour, for the library and its branches are integral parts of the City's educational plant."—Munro's *Municipal Government and Administration*, v. 2.

Ontario.—We have received the Annual Report of the Ontario Library Association 1923-24, which is full of interesting reading. It deals primarily with Ontario, but also contains a world survey of Library affairs in the English-speaking countries. The rural libraries problem is dealt with at length, and it is pleasing to note that "in two sections the problem is being attacked in a large way, *viz.*, California and Great Britain." The closing words of the Report are worthy of reproduction. "May I say that the Library situation, not only in Ontario, but generally throughout the English-speaking world, seems full of promise. There is developing an appreciation of the Library which will result in a greatly increased and more effective Library service."

Fiction and "Serious Literature."—This bogey has been given a little publicity recently by happenings at Bath, the truth of which has since been denied. Commenting on the Bath incident, a writer states that many Public Libraries "annually publish statistics showing that the number of non-fiction books borrowed has increased, while fiction has declined." We have little reason to be ashamed of the fact that fiction is provided by Public Libraries. We must of necessity, select and since we endeavour to obtain the best of the world's fiction, why not insist that there is a potency in good fiction that does not always appear in non-fiction ? Further, a lot of non-fiction is just masquerading. The novel has a very far-reaching power, and no one need ever adopt an apologetic attitude if he, as he should do, provides only the best.

Father Thames.—Wednesday, 18th June, saw a large number of members arrive in the vicinity of the King George V. Dock on the Thames, at North Woolwich, for the first part of the programme arranged for the Annual Meeting at Woolwich. The party were conducted on board the Atlantic Transport Company's s.s. *Belgenland*, and taken round this fine vessel. It is the largest boat that has been up the Thames, we believe, and truly deserves the title of a "floating palace," for the appointments were magnificent. There is a library on board, and the hours of opening—10-11, 4-5 ! The Company kindly

provided the party with a nicely served tea, and then, after a short speech of thanks from the Honorary Secretary, Messrs. Bursill and Luke hurried the members away. Shooter's Hill and Severndroog Castle were the next places to be visited. These were reached by tram and a short climb and after a glimpse at the surrounding country from the top of this eminence the party were hurried back to Woolwich Town Hall for refreshment and the Annual Business Meeting.

Annual Business Meeting.—The meeting was held in the Council Chamber of the Woolwich Town Hall, and the Mayor of Woolwich in a short speech, welcomed the Association. He was followed by Councillor Thompson, Chairman of the Woolwich Libraries Committee who revealing a very sympathetic attitude towards the library movement, showed himself to be in close touch with its modern developments, and one of its most ardent and broad-minded supporters. He could not have chosen as his main theme anything more appropriate than the question of professional status and it was a pity that the lengthy agenda caused him to deprive us of the pleasure of a longer address.

The Annual Report and Balance Sheet were adopted on the motion of the retiring President, and the Hon. Treasurer respectively, and after the result of the election for officers and council had been announced Mr. Parker handed over the (mythical) chain of office to the incoming President, Mr. I. Briggs, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The splendid address which we print in this issue provides food for serious thought to many assistants, especially in his idea of the ideal assistant. Fortunately assistants still exist who can be compared with the earlier craftsmen who, as Mr. Briggs put it, worked because they loved their work.

The new President could hardly have had a more pleasant initial duty than that of making the presentation to the retiring Honorary Editor. This task he executed in a particularly appropriate manner, and Mr. Sharp in reply, informed the meeting that with the contents of the wallet presented to him, he had decided to purchase a desk. Every member of the Association who knows, will willingly admit the tremendous amount of work which Mr. Sharp has so successfully applied to his onerous task during the past nine years. Here again, it is work loved by the doer, and Mr. Sharp doubtless feels recompensed by the knowledge that in quality and quantity the journal now stands as high as ever it did, and is accordingly recognised throughout the profession.

The revised Rules and Regulations were speedily adopted, after which Mr. A. E. Cummins moved, in eloquent fashion, a vote of thanks to the retiring officers and council. Mr. W. Benson Thorne replied, and remarked that he was tempted to recall memories of his lengthy connection with our Association. From 80, or thereabouts,

to nearly 800 should provide Mr. Thorne with memories of the growth of the A. A. L., perhaps he will oblige on some future occasion.

Votes of thanks to the Woolwich Borough Council for their courtesy in placing at our disposal their Council Chamber; to Mrs. and Mr. Bursill and the staff of the Woolwich Libraries for their zeal in assisting materially to the success of the day, concluded the meeting. Leaving the Chamber we wondered whether Mr. Luke has had at any time a close acquaintance with the art of stage management. Otherwise he could hardly have caused the curtain to have been rung down on his period of office as Hon. Secretary to the Education Committee by staging such a well-planned, enjoyable and memorable day. Well done, Mr. Luke!

The result of the ballot for Officers and Council is as follows:—

President : Mr. I. BRIGGS, Newcastle Public Libraries.

Vice-President : Mr. H. A. SHARP, Croydon Public Libraries.

Honorary Treasurer : Mr. R. COOPER, Battersea Public Libraries.

Honorary Secretary : Mr. GURNER P. JONES, Stepney Public Libraries.

Honorary Editor : Mr. H. CROSS, Croydon Public Libraries (141).

NOT ELECTED.—

Mr. F. S. SMITH, Bethnal Green Public Library (85).

COUNCIL.

DIVISIONAL REPRESENTATIVES.

Midland : Mr. G. L. BURTON, Birmingham.

North-Eastern : Mr. W. H. SMETTEM, Sunderland.

North-Western : Mr. GEOFFREY AXON, Manchester.

South Coast : Mr. F. A. RICHARDS, Portsmouth.

Yorkshire : Mr. HORACE GOULDEN, Huddersfield.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS*.

By I. BRIGGS, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne Public Libraries.*

I am very sensible of the honour attached to the position from which I address you to-day. My feelings are a mixture of pride and diffidence. When I think of my predecessors, and of the achievements of some of them in our library world, I realise very clearly that I have been elected to an important post, and one with a tradition that must be continued. However, in some respects I may compare with my predecessors, in one respect I dare to compare myself with them, and that is in my interest in our Association. I like to think that it is because of the work I have done for the Association that I find myself in this position to-day ; and in that case I get far more than compensation.

It is usual on these occasions for a President to spread his words over library matters of every kind, to summarise the present position, to estimate advance (if he sees any), to show the trend of new ideas, to describe the attempts of new practices. I prefer not to do much of this, but instead to concentrate on the Assistant Librarian and his intimate self. Matters of policy are after all generally beyond our influence. Movements of every kind are recorded faithfully (more or less) in our periodicals. The genus Assistant is more to my interest, and upon him I would rather dwell. But first the world in which he works cannot be ignored.

Taking all in all the library world is a better place materially than the assistant of some years back found it. Some things fought for on behalf of Public Libraries have been achieved. The greatest of these is recognition. All recent advance has followed recognition of the value of libraries to the community. There are still many inequalities, and many real anomalies, but I feel sure that the healthy growing system will shed them. It should be sufficient that they are at last properly recognised as anomalies. Removal must inevitably follow. If help in this direction were needed it is to hand in the shape of the "Report on the Public Library System," issued by the Carnegie Trustees. It is an exposure of the extraordinary anomalies existing at the present time. It is not possible to think that these will not be righted to a great extent, as the result of the scathing indictment by the cold logic of the tables. With other weaknesses this Report exposes the weakness of the Library Association. The production of some such report, and vigorous efforts to bring about a change in the conditions reported therein are naturally the work of any live associated body. After all, there is nothing in the Report of which librarians were not cognizant. The matters arrayed therein have been discussed at

* Delivered at Woolwich Town Hall, 18th June, 1924.

many a meeting for many a year. Still further, if there are any shortcomings in the Report they are to a great extent the fault of individual librarians, with their pettifogging parochial reasons for withholding information, or supplying it in their own way. The report also proves, if further proof were needed, the necessity for uniformity in the preparation of all library statistics. Even as it is we are justified in hoping that much improvement will follow its publication.

Who now questions the necessity of a highly educated body of librarians? Yet surely such are not necessary for the handling of rubbishy fiction and the dissemination of half-baked ideas! There is recognition here. Not only are very effective efforts being made to train and educate the assistant librarian, but it is now seen that he must be more generously educated to begin with. That again comes from the growing recognition of the value of libraries.

The selection of the Public Library as the proper place for the custody of local records and deeds; the library as the headquarters of societies, educational and literary, are also very significant of the growing recognition and appreciation. Finally, the fearsome press frequently uses us as copy.

I think, then, that we may leave that part of our affairs to be considered at some other time. I would, as I said before, come down to the individual, and I want to see if it is possible to find happiness for him in his work. There you have my theme, and I would have you understand that I am going to address most of my remarks especially to our younger members. There are apparently different ways of approach to this desirable condition. The majority, I fear, believe their best road to be by way of shorter hours and longer pay. After all, I suppose it depends upon what we mean by happiness. It is perfectly true that a big cheque promotes a jolly feeling, and more hours of leisure make the world seem a brighter place. But will either of these make us happier at our work? It is this condition that I wish to reach—for more reasons than the personal one. In the first place a happy worker is keeping more nearly the balance between the material pleasure and the spiritual happiness. The happy worker is a conscientious worker, and a little more. He adds that little more that love always gives. He is one with the earlier craftsmen and workers who put so much love into their work that for the sympathetic mind it is still potent with the power to uplift the spirit. This is very different from being a conscientious worker, even one who always keeps in mind the old saying: "Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might." That will certainly bring what we might call a moral satisfaction. But I doubt even its morality, for work done in that mood can feel like a task, and can be completed with an ejaculation of relief. Another reason for having the happy worker is that he will mean success for the work. We may have material progress in all sorts of ways, new and up-to-date methods of administration, labour-saving inventions, and

still not satisfy what I believe the library movement was intended to satisfy, and that is the mental life of the people. Only by having librarians whose view of their work is this one, who keep their own spiritual side strong by constant contact with the mental world in which they work, can the craving mental life of their readers be met sympathetically. We could easily say that such workers as I have described are not of the company of librarians and assistant librarians; and knowing them as we do are not likely to be produced. I think we would be wrong in saying so. There are already some such workers. I shall try to show how such library workers can be naturally produced, and why there are not more of them.

One reason why all assistants do not seem to be in tune with their work is because some of them should not be in libraries. The responsibility for this rests to a large extent upon the chiefs. They may not always have good material to choose from; but when they have to take material that they know is inferior, they should register a determination to make such cases temporary engagements. They should understand that assistants obviously undertaking uncongenial work, or having serious educational drawbacks, will become a hindrance to the working of the institution, a source of embarrassment to the chief, and a possible spot of irritation on the staff. To terminate such an appointment while the person is still young is only fair treatment all round. The experience will have done no harm, and they will still be young enough to have a fair chance to take up a change of work. It should be possible to judge correctly the possibilities of a youth or girl during, say, two years. After that it is manifestly unfair to turn them out. It is only mere duty to Chiefs, Committees, libraries and staffs, to tell the failures candidly that they are in the wrong place, and, before it is too late, had better try something else. It is necessary to talk this way, because our work is difficult work, and cannot be undertaken successfully by anyone.

That early mistake accounts for some assistants who are not in sympathy with their work. Probably, however, the need of an early generous education has in the past accounted for a larger number. This lack is a bad handicap when attempting the examinations of the Library Association. In framing the syllabus a fair educational grounding was taken for granted. To attempt to build and at the same time continue work on the foundations is a task beyond most people. To have to do this with very little time to do it in is not conducive to happiness and a love for one's work. The love of books must have been inherent in those who succeeded.

We have got our Assistant fitted in, and he finds the work congenial. He is, let us say, educationally equipped for the work, either by early good fortune or by a later determination to overcome his shortcomings. It is very much in his favour that he admits his shortcomings. What is to be the next step on the way to happiness?

Perhaps it is the realisation that he is employed in a highly privileged profession. If he is temperamentally fitted for the work he will early grasp this. Why should I say that our work is privileged? That is difficult to answer shortly. I do believe, though, that some of us must at times almost have felt the pulse of the world beating. Is not the flow of books from the brains of men like the flow of the life-blood of the sensory world? Does the flow of books not seem to come from this mighty pulsation? It does to me. Think again of the flow of books, larger or smaller, into every library. Do many assistants realise that it is possible for them to tap this current that drives the machinery of the whole world of thought and action? Having tapped it is there any limit to the uses of the gift it brings? There is not. Knowledge and enlightenment, food for the mind and the spirit, fullness of life, in fact, are to be got from it. Is there any other body of workers free of every realm in their work-a-day life? Do we not from the great power-house direct currents in every direction into every other kind of work? I cannot think of any other emporium in the world which specialises in the universal! We do. Every emanation from the human brain ultimately passes into books. Am I not right then in saying we are privileged?

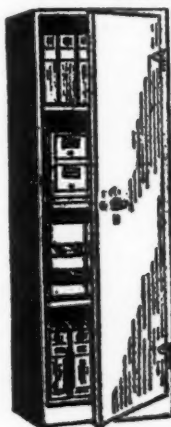
Our Assistant Librarian has made another advance on the road to happiness. He admits he is a privileged person. That alone is a great admission. What remains? Personally speaking I should say he needs the mental vision that will evoke the "spirit of place." What is it but the spirit of place that endears some spot, some district, some building to us? Is it not that we find ourselves so much in tune with it that we arrive at an intimacy that is almost personal? This evoking of the spirit of place is beautifully described by Alice Meynell in an early essay. Some of you may know it. In what place is there more likely to be such a spirit than a library? Are not many of the books spiritual embodiments? Once realise that, once grasp the fact that the books, being dead, yet speak, and it will be easy to get on intimate terms with the spirit of the place. We shall get more careful and reverential handling of the books. They will cease to be merely tools or merchandise.

Finally, is there any one thing that will bring about first the feeling of congeniality, then an admission of privilege, and later a feeling of very personal intimacy with the books of our daily work? Surely it is that one must be a reader. Is it not so very long ago since some foolish people debated a foolish question: "Should librarians read?" We do not ask that now. At least I have not heard it asked for a quite long time. Even so, do we pay as much attention to the subject as we should? It is no use just dropping the question, because it is felt to be wrong. If we once publicly asked: "Should Librarians read?" and we now believe they should read, why do we not more often say: "Librarians must read?" Each stage of the assistant librarian's

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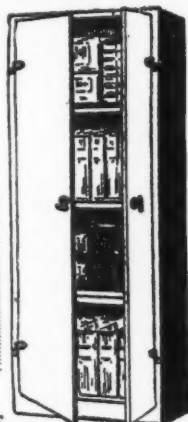
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induction to librarianship, as I have described it, depends upon reading. He will find it congenial because he gets pleasure from reading. He will consider it a privilege when his reading becomes more than a personal pleasure; when he begins to absorb knowledge that he may impart it to others. He will be fully inducted when he knows that he is reading the living word that will be spoken to him, if he go diligently, as no living person will speak it. We each have an ego different possibly from every other one in the world. In many of us that ego wants to be active and independent. Only in the mental world is that possible; and then only if we keep our thoughts to ourselves. In our corporeal social community there is no complete independence. I repeat that only in reading can one get near to it. That to me is the supreme joy in reading. Of course, I am now talking of reading entirely to one's bent. This is very different from the textbook and the merely informative stages. Pity the person who grinds away at that kind of reading and thinks he is a reader! There is no escape for the spirit there. There is no development of that which was given to me and possibly to none other. To be a reader is to be led away into spiritual realms that you could not describe to another, that you would never dream of trying to describe, simply because they are the realms in which your spirit sports, thrives, and rules, and in which no one else is concerned.

Perhaps it takes long days and much journeyings before we get to that delectable estate. Much that others think highly of will have to be passed by. Many experimental efforts will be necessary before the "self" shows unmistakably in which direction lies its desire. We must read on till we reach that stage described by Stevenson: "To know what you prefer, instead of humbly saying Amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive."

Perhaps we shall find our outlet in Romance. This is a different thing to different people. If, according to your own definition, a thing is romantic, and that is why you find yourself enjoying it, that is Romance. However many professors of literary knowledge write books describing Romance, it will still remain that each one will see it through his own nature:

"Who holds by Thee hath Heaven in fee
To gild his dross thereby.
And knowledge sure that he endure
A child until he die—
For to make plain that man's disdain
Is but new beauty's birth—
For to possess in loneliness
The joy of all the earth."

That is the gift of Romance to the spirit.

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Shall we sustain ourselves by Poetry, rare, elusive thing? Here again reading will bring us to it, will show us it in all sorts of unlikely places, and imbuing unlikely things. I am not going to try a definition of poetry. I doubt them all. Poetry is yours, or it is mine, something entirely for the individual spirit. I am sure though that it is not so much a thing as a means. Whatever the means it is the great revealer. Goethe said :—

" Poems are painted window panes.
If one looks from the square into the church,
Dusk and dimness are his gains——
Sir Philistine is left in the lurch !
The sight, so seen, may well enrage him,
Nor anything henceforth assuage him."
" But come just inside what conceals :
Cross the holy threshold quite—
All at once 'tis rainbow bright,
A gracious splendour truth reveals.
This to God's children is full measure,
It edifies and gives you pleasure."

Some will reach their emancipation through philosophy ; others in the wonder-land of science. Among all the greatness that we shall become intimate with, think of the wit and humour, the salt of life and thought. We can sample the very best of it when we like, as we like, and need never suffer a bore.

I have now given you my view of the complete librarian. I have shown why I think he should be proud of his work. You may think that the type I have delineated is hardly the one to tackle such modern problems as technical and commercial collections of books, popular lecture courses, wireless news-vending, etc. On the contrary, I think he will, because he will have won through to a balanced judgment of the relative value of such things. I should trust him to see all such extensions in true proportion sooner than I would the man who tickles the fickle with advertisements.

We may yet even come back to the early conception of librarianship. It is not impossible that we shall live to see certain parts of our present duties leave us. Except for purely educational purposes the technical, scientific, and commercial sections may later be found in the works, in the headquarters and clubs of societies, in the offices of multiple shops, and similar places. Public libraries cannot easily keep up with the rush of business production, new methods, new ideas of "progress," and the ceaseless change of mechanical invention. The people who live by this information call books tools, and use them as such. They may come to look upon their acquisition for their works and their shops as much a matter of course as their ready reckoners or their codes. We may then have the public libraries fulfilling their

earlier functions of education and mental nurture. Is not this after all the only way that the cost of a library can be borne fair to all? There will at least not be the grave doubt that some sections of the community are being provided with facilities for material gain at the expense of other sections.

In this little attempt at prophecy perhaps the wish is father to the thought. I dare not say it is without prejudice.

LIBRARIANSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL THEORY.*

By J. GERARD O'LEARY, *St. Pancras Public Libraries.*

"If we are to discuss the importance of art, learning and intellectual culture," wrote Bernard Shaw, "the first thing to recognise is, that we have very little of them at present, and that this little has not been produced by compulsory education, nay, that scarcity is unnatural and has been produced by the violent exclusion of art and artists from the schools." Of this there cannot be any doubt, that there is a lack of education. What is meant by education? To define it in its widest and most important aspect, I quote Spencer who says: "How to live that is the most important point for us, the right ruling of conduct under all circumstances, to prepare us for *complete living* is the function which education has to discharge. Froebel wrote: "To educate one's self and others is a twofold achievement of wisdom, it began with the first appearance of man upon earth, it was manifest with the first appearance of all self consciousness in man, and now begins to proclaim itself as a universal requirement of humanity." It is a common error to regard education as being synonymous with schools and teaching. Nothing could be further from the true aim of education than the system practised generally in the Schools. "Our great danger in education is the worship of book learning. The confusing of instruction with education. We strain the memory instead of training the mind. The children are wearied with the mechanical art of writing and the interminable intricacies of spelling. They are, oppressed by columns of dates, by lists of kings and places, which convey no real meaning to their minds, and have no near relation to their daily wants and occupations." Ruskin said this of education fifty years ago, and much of it holds good now. There is a system of competition, of examinations, of marks and prizes which places a premium on mere sharpness and cleverness. This only tends to ignore the vital aspects of education and results in a narrow and dangerous policy. Dangerous, because examinations and degrees do not necessarily bring with them a wide understanding, and practical results are the accepted criterion of scholastic training. Bernard Shaw is the author of the epigram: "When a man teaches something he does not know,

* A paper read before the Association of Assistant Librarians, May 14th, 1924.

to someone who has no aptitude for it, and gives him a certificate of proficiency, the latter has received the education of a gentleman." All this arises from the error of confusing the knowledge of facts with the understanding of them. " Knowledge is the instrument in the hands of man, and if he be educated and therefore reaching out to higher things, his knowledge will be used for purposes ministering to the common good. If he be uneducated, merely drifting down the streams of opportunity, then his knowledge will be used for false purposes. The field of education is a common, upon which *all* men may meet and exercise rights no matter the difference of their daily activities. Every man and every woman, is potentially a student, although, perhaps, not actually so. Every person has that capacity for wonder and pure enjoyment, and it is one of the tragedies of modern life, that this sense of beauty gets worn away." Education then, should have for its object the cultivation of human thought, a planting of seeds that will prove a green shade away from this " Sorry scheme of things entire." This criticism is not entirely destructive. My aim is that it should be constructive in so far that if Librarianship is to have a definite educational policy, the errors of the past shall not be repeated. What is the present policy of the Public Library? It defies a quoted definition, for the simple reason, that professional literature deals entirely with *practice*, and not at all with abstract. A significant fact. There are two distinct sides of the work. The purely bibliographical, which has bibliography as a means towards an end. Mark Rutherford wrote: " Hitherto, science has been the subjugation of the External senses. I dream sometimes of a science which shall be cultivated as the physical sciences are now, but shall have for its object our private peace and happiness." That almost expresses my idea of what education and culture means, and what should mainly constitute the theory of Librarianship. It is a modern fashion to deride the old ideas of Librarianship. The idea of collecting books in vast numbers and keeping the public as far as possible from them. They disregarded text books and went in for pure literature. I disagree with that idea, but it was at least a definite policy. That policy has been " improved " away with nothing to take its place. There is a negative policy, which has for its end the perfection of practical appliances, making these things an end in themselves instead of being a means towards an end. A positive policy is essential, and I have stated my opinion that it should be educational. We are not achieving any definite result, being merely content to place books within the public reach, and there the matter ends. There is a supposed improvement in Public Libraries during the last few years. That improvement connotes only methods of administration, aided mainly by Andrew Carnegie's promiscuous philanthropy. Benefactions that came when new ideas were in the air, and the system of Libraries was completed on half-matured plans. Not that these gifts were not necessary, but they came too rapidly. We view that period

of transition in a nimbus of sentiment, and out of that rainbow looms Mr. Duff Brown. The modern Librarian refuses to see any room for development beyond the lines laid down in the "Manual of Library Economy," a book which has had a remarkable influence, because it dealt solely with method, and Librarianship has concerned itself solely with method ever since. A reaction of course, from the early methodless days. Now method has become a deity and the smoke from the burnt offerings on that altar, has cast a pall over our immediate horizon. There is one great fundamental error in Mr. Duff Brown's ideas. He regarded only a *section* of the public as possible readers. Whereas every member of the public is potentially a reader, and it is our duty to make them actually so. Great interest has been expressed in the idea of having special technical departments and Libraries. Vocational education has its importance but it is not the final purpose of education in its purest sense. The needs of the technical student are receiving the amount of attention because his needs are more tangible. He desires commercial success, and therefore receives every sympathy. This small review of Library practice would be incomplete without mentioning the Juvenile Library. Here things are moving in a right direction, but too slowly, and the organised children's library is the exception rather than the rule. University extension lectures and courses of public lectures are common enough, but are not attended with remarkable results. The public lectures are extremely general and tend towards entertainment rather than use. The financial prohibition results very often, in lectures of doubtful scholarship. A lecturer in an important London Library speaking on Rome and its historic walls, said: "On these walls Keats wrote 'Endymion unbound.'" This brings me to the main point, that the present policy of Librarianship is narrow and unprogressive. We are in the wrong street or rather we are in a cul-de-sac. History gives a constant record of the failure of many laudable attempts for improving conditions and encouraging the search after knowledge. The reason of their failure lies in the fact that they lost sight of the purpose for which they were founded. They lost their main idea, and the point of view of the people for whom they were founded. In the same way, our point of view is too much of the Librarian's. We fail to see the Library from the same angle as the public. To fail entirely is impossible on our part, owing to the public funds. Yet we can lose sight of the reason of our existence and become merely Local Government departments. Librarianship must form a wide educational policy, connecting education in its widest sense, that pursuit of beauty which should be the work of every man. This policy should be definite and progressive. Aggressive if you like, rather than there should be negative. We must plant and foster a spirit of enquiry, that spirit, which, according to Buckle, "remedied three fundamental errors. In politics, too confiding; in science, too credulous; in religion, too intolerant." Not merely

placing books within the reach of those who have a definite leaning towards reading, but proving the importance of books and teaching the public what they contain. By teaching I do not mean that we should teach in the manner of the class room. The teacher has for his medium the spoken word. Ours the printed book. The teacher has for his subject certain confined curricula, for his object the training of the memory. The librarian has for his subject a heritage of the world's wisdom, for his object the training of the human mind. Hence the need of a broad outlook. No practical conclusions are drawn from these remarks, I am only trying to state a point of view. To put a new policy into force now would be practically impossible. There is the future, when the need will be greater. It is culture that will prove an antidote to the excessive commercialism of this age of machinery. Conditions become so artificial that nature and higher things are lost sight of all together. and it is through the medium of our work that I see a loophole for escape. In our work I see the realisation of many common, and some personal ideals. My faith in its final accomplishment is unbounded, providing we keep in view the things that matter. Our triumph, will be in some measure the triumph of letters, the victory of beauty over that which is dull and sordid.

THE DIVISIONS.

MIDLAND DIVISION.

A meeting of the above was held on May 28th last at the Reference Library, Ratclif Place, by kind permission of the Chief Librarian, Walter Powell, Esq.

Proceedings began with a business meeting at which it was announced that the Committee has subscribed for ten sets of tickets for "ordinary" nights for the forthcoming season at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. These tickets may be had from Miss V. B. Weston of the Reference Library. After some discussion it was decided to hold the "Flannel" Dance on July 23rd, and the Summer Outing to Yarningle Common, on July 9th. The meeting decided that in future, the Divisional Representative on the A. A. L. Council be the Divisional Secretary for the time being.

The remainder of the time was devoted to a Magazine Evening—a most successful experiment, and one which, it is hoped, will be repeated. The title chosen—though the reason for the choice was not very clear—was "The Medal." Miss Dry and an anonymous contributor were responsible for the amusing advertisements. A full-dress editorial was contributed by Mr. H. Woodbine. Among the characteristic gems of wit and wisdom of the editor were also some Divisional congratulations—if such a phrase may be used—on the novelty of the idea of a Magazine evening. The Letter Column included some interesting passages from a letter from Mr. P. O'Byrne, of the National Library of Ireland, to Miss E. Weston, *a propos* the last meeting which was devoted to the Modern Irish Literary Movement. An Anonymous contributor supplied the Magazine with Library News dated April 1st, 1930. He (or she) very clearly illustrated the truth of the statement that "There's nothing new under the sun."

Among the articles in prose was "How the Daily Mail Reporter interviewed the Cow that jumped over the Moon," by Miss Matthews; "Literary and Topographical Errors," selected with more discrimination than is usual in this type of paper, by Mr. H. Sargeant; and a clever sketch by Miss Davis, of Wolverhampton, entitled "Jacky Boy: a study from life." Miss Dry contributed "Spring Cleaning in our Empire"; Miss Pattison some "Evening Thoughts" a distinctive though brief article; and Mr. G. L. Burton, some sound "Notes on John Masefield as a Dramatist."

Among the poets, or perhaps more correctly the poetesses, Miss C. Dallison was represented by "An Appeal unto the Great One: an account of a day in the life of a 'Library Lady,'" with many topical hints and references; and Miss P. M. Vernon, by "Gold Fever" a charming poem rather unfortunate in its title. Miss Dry fruitful in good works, though unable to be present, contributed a poem as did an anonymous writer whose "Beginnings" was much admired.

The Ramblers held their 34th Ramble—the second Midnight one—on Whit-Sunday and Monday.

A party of about nineteen left Birmingham at 8.50 p.m. on Sunday, arriving at Ashchurch at 10.20, walking on to Tewkesbury, where they were entertained at supper by Mrs. Crisp and Mr. Harry Crisp.

The Ramble proper began at "The witching hour" and though no elves crept forth, the moon-lit night and the impassioned song of the nightingales—not "tinned" or canned ones—were sufficient for the romantic souls—those of course, who had cultivated their "intellectual eye"—who started on their tea-making trek for Bredon Hill. The way lay through Mitton, Bredon's Hardwick and Westmancote. After climbing up through bracken past the Stone King and Queen of Bredon, the first tea was made in a pinewood. Afterwards, no count was kept of the activities in this department.

Bredon Hill—an exceptional spot in many ways—is an ideal place from which to observe the rising of the sun. The devout worshippers at the shrine of Nature's secret heart paid their tribute to the East, as their pagan ancestors used to do, and after much commiserating of, and groaning over, the materialists who had missed the wonders of the starry night and the culminating glory of the dawn—an "intellectual" one, of course, for the carnal delights of bed, made a descent on Lulu Farm for breakfast.

One would have thought that the good folk of the farm would have provided a simple meal of oaten cake and honey for her visitants trooping down the slope like a company of fauns and dryads struck by the pale-gilt beams of the early hour, but no! A Chestertonian meal awaited them, though pastoral goats were not wanting. The goats were not "intellectual" but fully evident to the senses.

After breakfast came another rest on the hill side to watch the rousing of life in the valley, the scampering ponies and above all, high up on the other side of the valley, its crowning ornament—Malvern, the city set on a hill, which cannot be hid, no, not at any price. Lulled by the humming of the bees, the perfume of the lilac, the orchard blossom, and the goats, many of the party fell asleep, but were persuaded to make their way to Evesham where the rest of the day was spent.

The party arrived back in Birmingham on Monday night at 9.24. The feelings of all were probably voiced by the young lady who said she was all asleep except for her eyes.

A. R. W.

NORTH-EAST DIVISION.

A meeting of this Division was held at West Hartlepool on Wednesday, May 7th, at the invitation of Major L. Downey, D.S.O., F.L.A., Chief Librarian and Curator.

We were cordially received by the Librarian and His Worship the Mayor, Councillor J. W. Wilson, J.P., who attended at a considerable sacrifice of valuable time. Later, at tea, we enjoyed his hospitality. After the reception some time was spent in examining the library. This has recently been very successfully adapted to open-access methods, and the visitors did not stint their appreciation of the manner in which it had been carried out. It afforded also an opportunity of examining an application of the Brown classification. The visitors next were taken to see the War Memorial, then by motor bus to Old Hartlepool Public Library and Museum, and then to the historic St. Hilda's Church. From there a walk along the sea-front by way of the interesting and unique old promenade gave everyone a welcome dose of sea air. Back by motor bus to tea in the Gray Art Gallery at West Hartlepool, and an enjoyable afternoon was ended.

At the evening session we were favoured with an address from Major Downey on "Print Production." In every way it was a model—in arrangement of matter, in conciseness, and in the simple use of technical terms. To the student taking bibliography it must have been very welcome. This was followed by a symposium of views on the Carnegie U. K. Trust "Report on the Public Library System of Great Britain and Ireland (1921-1923)." The following took part in the symposium: Mr. W. H. Smettem, Sunderland; Mr. E. Patterson, Armstrong College; Miss L. Green, Mr. W. H. Gibson, Mr. I. Briggs, Newcastle; and Mr. H. Burgess, South Shields.

More than one speaker said it was a pity that the Report did not come from the Library Association. It was the kind of work that would naturally be produced by an Association that was really alive and fulfilling its proper functions. All, however, paid tribute to the way it has been handled by its compilers. The tables of statistics met with some adverse criticism; but it was recognised that librarians had not helped with information altogether as they should have done. Again, the tables suffered because of the many ways libraries have of compiling statistics. Whatever else the tables did, they proved that the confusion in library practice could not be found in the methods of any other business or profession; and showed that the recent call for standardised methods and returns should meet with an eager approval from every library.

Co-ordination among libraries was unanimously supported. On this matter the speakers thought that the conclusions of the Report could not be challenged. That a reader of books should not be penalised because he lived in the country; or that a citizen should not be expected to pay for the upkeep of a reference library to be used by readers who paid no library rate, are not new discoveries. That some people get fewer books, though rated higher, than others, is not new. Neither is the glaring fact that some get books and starve the librarian, while others pay the librarian and get no books. These matters, after all, have for long been familiar.

But not until they are accumulated and arranged as in this Report, can their full significance be grasped.

Newsrooms came under the ban of several speakers. Curtailment, rather than abolition, was supported, though most felt that if the library had to suffer through the upkeep of a newsroom, then the newsroom should go. The Report, while it gives some leading points for and against, leaves the matter open.

The Report gives very welcome up-to-date details of the Carnegie Trustees work for Rural Libraries. This part got nothing but praise. The rural library movement was thought likely to solve many problems. Through it co-ordination could be brought about to a very considerable extent. Poor urban libraries were shown a way to salvation. In fact, an ideal scheme of library facilities from rural to National in one vast piece of machinery, did not seem now to be an impossibility. One speaker pointed out, though, that some of the vexed questions, for instance, that of salaries, could only be settled when the rate levy question was settled. On this matter of unequal rates he had a feeling that the Report had hurried over it. It is more serious than one would judge from the section given to it. Perhaps it is a bigger thing than the library service can arrange from within, and will have to be settled by greater power from outside.

Finally, it was hoped by all that the Report would have as great an effect on public library policy as had the Adams Report of 1916.

Mr. W. E. Hurford presided over an attendance of 48, and moved votes of thanks to Major Downey and his staff for their keen interest in the meeting, and for their hospitality. These were heartily supported.

YORKSHIRE DIVISION.

A meeting of the Division was held at the Victoria Institute and Public Library, Saltaire, on Wednesday, June 4th, when about twenty-five members from Leeds, Bradford, Keighley, and Wakefield inspected the Library.

Members were cordially welcomed by Councillor F. Fearnley Rhodes, Chairman of the Shipley Council, who was supported by Councillor White, Vice-Chairman of the Public Libraries Committee. Mr. G. W. Strother (Leeds) acknowledged the welcome on behalf of the Division.

Following the welcome a paper, entitled "Pamphlet Literature," was given by Mr. Wilfrid Robertshaw (Reference Library, Bradford). Mr. Robertshaw pleaded for the recognition of pamphlet literature, and emphasised the value of pamphlets to the student of history. The value of pamphlets to the student of history, and of that product of history which we term contemporary thought, was far greater than we generally imagined. The public had almost ceased to read pamphlets for the conduct of life; and when they did read them it was retrospectively, with an eye to their literary value. Library assistants should not overlook the probable usefulness of these humble productions when testing the sources of their stocks in their endeavour to render the best service of which they were capable. A short discussion followed the paper, after which a vote of thanks was extended to the speaker by Mr. Proctor (Leeds), seconded by Miss Hummerston (Leeds). The members were later entertained to tea, and the thanks of the Division to the Libraries Committee were expressed by Mr. Strother and Mr. Maltby (Bradford).

At 6.45 p.m. the members again assembled in the Victoria Institute to hear the Report of the Delegates from the Division to the Annual Meeting of the A. A. L. Council on May 14th. The report was read by Mr. Proctor, and on the motion of Mr. Robertshaw, seconded by Mr. Maltby, the report was approved, and thanks of the members were given to the Delegates. Mr. Proctor suitably replied.

This was followed by a paper by Miss Mary Sawyers, entitled "Shakespearean Music, with special reference to 'Twelfth Night.'" The Elizabethan Age, she said, was marked by a tremendous spiritual renaissance which profoundly affected every department of national life. The grand, free spirit of the age was epitomised in its literature and music, both of which were instinct of life and vigour. Music became an essential in the lives of Elizabethans; it was the natural accompaniment of their dances and festivals, while it also acted as a medium through which to express their awakening consciousness of national power and personal well-being. Poetry was the medium through which the most inspired passions of a writer might be expressed. It was true that fine prose could be infinitely beautiful and approach the music of poetry, but its primary appeal was made directly to the mind, and not the senses. Thus, in "Twelfth Night," we found the grandest thoughts embodied in the verse, while the lighter and more materialistic element was expressed through the medium of prose. "Twelfth Night," she added, is undoubtedly the most musical of Shakespeare's plays; it is imbued with love and laughter, tragedy is made ludicrous, and the spirit of comedy holds high revel. This much appreciated paper was followed by a short discussion, and a hearty vote of thanks was moved to the speaker by Miss Wragg (Wakefield), seconded by Mr. Robertshaw.

G. P. JACKSON, *Hon. Sec.*

REVIEWS.

Rees, Gwendolen. *Libraries for Children: a history and a bibliography.* 260 pp. 8½ in. × 5½ in. 1924. Cloth. Grafton. 12\$ 6.

Although we have had of late years, as Miss Rees bibliography will testify, a number of good works on the Children's Library, we had need of such a volume as this before us, dealing as it does with the hitherto uncharted ground of the actual provision of books to children, both in the past and to-day.

In a brief introduction Miss Rees stresses the importance and value of the reading-habit in the education of the child, "It is," she rightly remarks, "the children of to-day and they alone, who will help, either to continue and develop, or to mar and destroy the vast achievements of the past, and the present—largely in accordance with the way in which they are trained." It is our duty to see that they are educated so that they will be able to fulfil their duty as citizens.

The main portion of the work is a well written and compact survey of the work which has been done in the past, and is being done to-day, towards fostering in the child a love of all that is best in literature and life. It is arranged in sections according to the country, every important European Country is noticed besides the Dominions and America. It is good to see that ample space is given to American work in this field in which, as in so many others, they were pioneers. The whole is brought to a close by a select bibliography

of over 1,000 books and articles on the subject. It remains to heartily congratulate Miss Rees on this work, which with the possible exceptions of the works of Miss S. H. Powell, and Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers, is the most important book on the subject, and one which every librarian should secure.

E. McC.

Smith, H. B. Lees-. A Guide to Parliamentary and Official Papers. 24 pp. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. 1924. Paper. Milford, Oxford Pr. 2/- n.

The Author, who is Lecturer in Public Administration at the London School of Economics, examines and defines in detail the various classes of documents issued by the British Government. Changes and complications which have arisen during and since the war in the variety and quantity of official publications, will make this guide of inestimable use to the library profession.

APPOINTMENTS.

*MARCUS, L. A., Junior Assistant, Bethnal Green Public Library, to be Junior Assistant, St. Pancras Public Libraries.

*MASSEY, H. G., Deputy Librarian at Cheltenham, previously of the Bingham Library, Cirencester, to be Librarian and Curator, Chelmsford. The other selected candidates were, Messrs. A. H. Gillman (Camberwell), J. Ormerod (Derby), and F. T. Sleight (Rochdale).

Mr. Sleight withdrew his application.

PARRY, G. H., to be Deputy Chief Librarian, Liverpool Public Libraries, in succession to H. E. Curran, retired.

WADLEY, WILLIAM, Deputy Librarian, to be Chief Librarian, Kensington Public Libraries, on the retirement of Mr. Herbert Jones.

*WICKENS, E. C., to be Chief Cataloguing Assistant, Liverpool Public Libraries, in succession to C. Robertson, retired.

*WOODS, V. H., Second Assistant, Stoke Newington Public Library, to be an Assistant in the Birmingham Public Libraries.

Salary: £150 plus present bonus; total, £235.

• Member, A. A. L.

NEW MEMBERS.

Members.—Miss Matilda Harman (Rugby), John W. March (Exeter), B. J. Maslen (Bath), Henry A. Stow (Peterborough).

Midland Division : Members.—Mr. P. B. Higgins, Mr. R. H. Roberts (Walsall); Miss M. Harris (West Bromwich). **Associate.**—Miss E. Asson (West Bromwich).

Yorkshire Division : Members.—Miss A. Ince (Shipley), Miss K. E. Heighway (Bradford), Miss E. Scarth (Morley).

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.**LIBRARIAN.**

Applications are invited for the appointment of a Librarian (either sex), under the County rural Library scheme.

Applicants, who must not be over 35 years of age, should hold the diploma of Librarianship of the London University, or have had practical experience of Library work.

Salary, £300 per annum.

Forms of application can be obtained from the Education Office, Hertford, and must be returned duly completed by the 12th July, 1924.
